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RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0220  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 000455

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

IO/RHS FOR OSTERMEIER, DRL/MLGA FOR WALTERS, EUR/CE FOR TRATENSEK, EUR/ERA FOR GIAUGUE AND CONNICK

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/16/2013

TAGS: PREL PGOV PHUM KDEM EZ EUN

SUBJECT: GOCR TO SUPPORT PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE EVENT;  
HAVEL DECLINES KEYNOTE ROLE

REF: A. CARNIE-WALTERS E-MAIL DATED 7/15/08

1B. STATE 74681

1C. STATE 70829

1D. DODMAN-OTALLAH E-MAIL DATED 7/3/08

Classified By: Acting POLEC Counselor Martina Strong for reasons 1.4 (b)  
) and (d).

11. (SBU) Czech MFA Director of Human Rights and Transition Policy, Gabriela Dlouha, stated that the GOCR is willing to support the July 24 prisoners of conscience event. She noted that this proposed event was discussed at the EU Working Party on Human Rights (COHOM) meeting July 8 (see below) and that while no EU consensus was reached, it was clear that member states were free to act independently. The Czech MFA has received our most recent draft non-paper (revised on July 15) outlining this event, and Dlouha indicated she would contact her colleagues at the Czech Mission to the UN to provide these details and to instruct them to provide assistance to the USG on this event. She encouraged us to engage the Czech NY mission directly to discuss this collaboration in greater depth.

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COHOM Dynamics - U.S. Proposal Generally Viewed Unfavorably

12. (C) Dlouha noted that when the EU member states discussed this proposed event in Brussels during the July 8 COHOM meeting, many members appeared to lack details/information. She also noted that while the GOCR spoke in favor of the proposal, three or four member states were explicit in their opposition to the event, while the rest were silent. According to Dlouha, much of the internal discussion focused on the location of the event (NYC versus Geneva - with an EU preference for Geneva) and the list of countries (some members questioned the selection of the six countries of origin of the prisoners of conscience). As a suggestion, Dlouha recommended that the USG should engage the EU member state Ambassadors in NY individually, since we might be able to sway a few others to lend support to this event.

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Vaclav Havel Declines Secretary's Invitation

13. (SBU) On July 14, Embassy Prague conveyed the invitation from Secretary Rice as well as a note signed by Ambassador Gruber to Vaclav Havel's office. Emboff followed up with Sabina Tancevova, the assistant to the former Czech President, to emphasize USG interest in Havel's participation, whether in person or via video. On July 16, post received a faxed response from Vaclav Havel.  
Begin text:

Dear Secretary Rice:

Thank you very much for your kind invitation to participate as the keynote speaker at a public event organized at the United Nations headquarters in New York on July 24 to build awareness of the plight of prisoners of conscience in countries around the world.

I very appreciate your invitation, however I am planning to be out of Prague this date since I have already other confirmed engagements and would be difficult for me to organize traveling to New York and also to arrange to be present at the event via video conference.

I believe you will understand and let me wish the event great success.

Sincerely,

Vaclav Havel.

End text.  
Graber